

KEY TEXTS FROM PENTAGON'S VIETNAM

Following are the texts of key documents accompanying the Pentagon's study of the Vietnam war, covering events in the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations. Except where excerpting is specified, the documents appear verbatim, with only unmistakable typographical errors corrected.

Report of Ho's Appeals to U.S. In '46 to Support Independence

Cablegram from an American diplomat in Hanoi, identified as Landon, to State Department, Feb. 27, 1946, as provided in the body of the Pentagon study.

Ho Chi Minh handed me 2 letters addressed to President of USA, China, Russia, and Britain identical copies of which were stated to have been forwarded to other governments named. In 2 letters to Ho Chi Minh request ~~USA~~ as one of United Nations to support idea of Annamese independence according to Philippines example, to examine the case of the Annamese, and to take steps necessary to maintenance of world peace which is being endangered by French efforts to reconquer Indochina. He asserts that Annamese will fight until United Nations interfered in support of Annamese independence. The petition addressed to major United Nations contains:

A. Review of French relations with Japanese where French Indochina allegedly aided Japs:

B. Statement of establishment on 2

September 1945 of PENW Democratic Republic of Viet Minh:

C. Summary of French conquest of Cochinchina began 23 Sept 1945 and still incomplete:

D. Outline of accomplishments of Annamese Government in Tonkin including popular elections, abolition of undesirable taxes, expansion of education and resumption as far as possible of normal economic activities:

E. Request to 4 powers: (1) to intervene and stop the war in Indochina in order to mediate fair settlement and (2) to bring the Indochinese issue before the United Nations organization. The petition ends with the statement that Annamese ask for full independence in fact and that in interim while awaiting UNO decision the Annamese will continue to fight the reestablishment of French imperialism. Letters and petition will be transmitted to Department soonest.

1952 Policy Statement by U.S. On Goals in Southeast Asia

Statement of Policy by the National Security Council, early 1952; on "United States Objectives and Courses of Action With Respect to Southeast Asia." According to a footnote, the document defined Southeast Asia as "the area embracing Burma, Thailand, Indochina, Malaya and Indonesia."

Objective

1. To prevent the countries of Southeast Asia from passing into the communist orbit, and to assist them to develop will and ability to resist communism from within and without and to contribute to the strengthening of the free world.

General Considerations

2. Communist domination, by whatever means, of all Southeast Asia would

seriously endanger in the short term, and critically endanger in the longer term, United States security interests.

a. The loss of any of the countries of Southeast Asia to communist aggression would have critical psychological, political and economic consequences. In the absence of effective and timely counteraction, the loss of any single country would probably lead to relatively swift submission to or an alignment with communism by the remaining countries of this group. Furthermore, an alignment with communism of the rest of

So
lon
the
Pa
pro
wi
the

ea
in
ca
fu
the

an
so

produc
tological
rice ex
critical
and Ho
signific
imports

d. Th
cially of Malaya and Indonesia, could result in such economic and political pressures in Japan as to make it extremely difficult to prevent Japan's eventual accommodation to communism.

3. It is therefore imperative that an overt attack on Southeast Asia by the Chinese Communists be vigorously opposed. In order to pursue the military courses of action envisaged in this paper to a favorable conclusion within a reasonable period, it will be necessary to divert military strength from other areas thus reducing our military capability in those areas, with the recognized increased risks involved therein, or to increase our military forces in being, or both.

4. The danger of an overt military attack against Southeast Asia is inherent in the existence of a hostile and aggressive Communist China, but such an attack is less probable than continued communist efforts to achieve domination through subversion. The primary threat to Southeast Asia accordingly arises from the possibility that the situation in Indochina may deteriorate as a result of the weakening of the resolve of, or as a result of the inability of the governments of France and of the Associated States to continue to oppose the Viet Minh rebellion, the military strength of which is being steadily increased by virtue of aid furnished by the Chinese Communist regime and its allies.

5. The successful defense of Tonkin is critical to the retention in non-Communist hands of mainland Southeast Asia. However, should Burma come under communist domination, a communist Thailand might make Indochina, including Tonkin militarily indefensible. The execution of

STATINTL